DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 140 468 EA 009 634

AUTHOR	Krajewski, Robert J.
TITLE	Role Implications of a Rank Ordering Process by Elementary Principals.
PUB DATE	Apr 77
NOTE	16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (Las Vegas, Nevada, April 18-22, 1977)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Attitudes; *Administrator Role; Curriculum; Discipline; Elementary Education; *Principals; *Role Perception; Supervisors; Tables (Data); Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS	Texas

ABSTRACT

To obtain a realistic understanding of the supervisory role perception of the elementary principal, a 10-item questionnaire was sent to 400 elementary principals and teachers throughout Texas. They rank ordered both real and ideal role dimensions and agreed that the role is not what it should be. Principals now serve as disciplinarians but do not wish to do so. Both teachers and principals would like to see the principal as a staff selector/orientor. Neither group was too anxious to see the principal as an evaluator, although teachers felt that principals carry out this role more than principals believe they do. In conclusion, both principals (very strongly) and teachers want the principal's role as instructional and curriculum supervisor to be more pronounced than it presently is. (Author)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED140468

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ROLE IMPLICATIONS OF A RANK ORDERING PROCESS BY ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS*

Robert J. Krajewski, Auburn University

The elementary principalship has often been characterized as the best job in education. Indeed the role of the elementary principal is an extremely important one, and is simultaneously both demanding and gratifying. When one speaks of the elementary principal's role, the relationship of the management function to the instructional leadership function is readily observed; the expected role interests and competencies are mostly managerial, with very little concern for instructional leadership. Some of the required factors involved are staff, funds, facilities, needs of the people, policies, traditions and desires of community----a number of different things which go into determining the role of the principal.

Most elementary principals feel like they're drowning in a sea of duties. They've got to be disciplinarian, fire drill coordinator, teacher evaluator, curriculum supervisor, building custodian, morale builder, staff selector, school program administrator, instructional leader, pupil services coordinator, keeper of the keys, staff and student scheduling coordinator, handyman, team leader, PTA leader, manager----and yes, in some rural areas, coal carrier and furnace tender. Most, however, remain very optimistic in the face of these sundry demanding duties and maintain their composure, even on those days when they feel that:

- things just didn't go right
- they are facing less than a friendly faculty
- they need praise but they don't get it from anyone
- somebody is on their back all the time.

---

*This is a report of a presentation delivered at the 1977 annual meeting of the National Association of Elementary School Principals, Las Vegas, Nevada.

EA 009 634

Role expectations are thrust upon the principal from all sectors, public as well as private, each of whom consider their demands more significant than any others. Of those duties performed by the elementary principal on a regular basis, the following ten were considered in the present study: staff selector/orientator, instructional supervisor, public relations facilitator, pupil services coordinator, self-evaluator, curriculum supervisor, teacher evaluator, school program administrator, disciplinarian, and morale builder.

Staff Selector/Orientator - any role that the principal sometimes plays or should play with the recruiting and selecting of staff members of the school and helping through any orientation activities of one kind or another enabling that new member of the staff to become an integral part of the school.

Instructional Supervisor - the key word being supervisor, the role having to do with planned contacts that the principal has with teachers in helping them to do a better job.

Public Relations Facilitator - as we obviously deal with many publics, teachers, students, parents, community, and significant others, the principal as a key person in helping carry out the public relations.

Pupil Services Coordinator - this includes the many things that need to be done such as counseling services, library services, and the like.

Self-Evaluator - the extent to which the role of the principal includes looking at oneself and one's own progress in role.

Curriculum Supervisor - helping the curriculum program itself to evolve, to change, and to grow over a period of time through effective planning and coordinating.

Teacher Evaluator - primarily the hiring and firing kinds of decisions, promotion, recognition, and the like.

School Program Administrator - the general administrative duties of making sure the school functions properly, i.e., coordination of the whole show.
Disciplinarian - implies particularly dealing with certain problem youngsters who are sent to the principal's attention by the teachers.
Morale Builder - those things the principal does to increase the job satisfactions and the sense of well-being in the interpersonal interactions that occur within a school.

The object of the study was to find out which of these duties were thought to be (most and least) important in the role of the Texas elementary school principal. A ten item questionnaire (incorporating the preceding listed items) was sent to over 400 Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association (TEPSA) member elementary principals (and selected teachers in their schools) asking them to rank order the duties on both the real and ideal dimension.

TABLE 1: Elementary Principal (N = 183) numerical and mean score rankings, real and ideal, of their perceived role.

Role	Principal Real (PR) Rank	Mean	Principal Ideal (PI) Rank	Mean
Staff selector/orientator	9	6.92	3	4.49
Instructional supervisor	4	5.02	1	2.49
Public relations facilitator	3	4.98	5	5.65
Pupil services coordinator	6	5.44	7	5.90
Self-evaluator	10	8.10	9	7.63
Curriculum supervisor	8	6.23	2	4.03
Teacher evaluator	7	5.56	8	6.07
School program administrator	1	2.94	4	4.57
Disciplinarian	2	4.42	10	8.37
Morale builder	5	5.37	6	5.66

Table 1 reveals results from the principals' rankings (183 usable responses). On the real scale the principals said they considered themselves first - program administrator, second - disciplinarian, third - public relations facilitator, fourth - instructional supervisor, fifth - morale builder. . . . .ninth - staff selector, and tenth - self-evaluator. So the elementary principals felt that they had little role in selecting their staff and little role in self-evaluation. On the ideal scale, the elementary principals' first choice was that of instructional supervisor; secondly, they chose curriculum supervisor. Moreover, they definitely wanted to have a hand in selecting the teaching staff for their school (ranked #3). Their fourth ranked selection was administrator. Principals, although most function as disciplinarians (ranked #2 on the real scale), certainly do not wish to do so (ranked #10 ideally). Those are the actual rank orders as perceived by the elementary principals. Looking at the mean ratings on the real scale, the #1 mean (school program administrator) was 2.9 and the next mean (disciplinarian) was 4.4, through the #10 mean (self-evaluator) at 8.1. On the ideal scale, interestingly enough, principals overwhelmingly selected instructional supervisor, with a mean rating of 2.49. The next higher mean rating was that of curriculum supervisor, 4.0, a significant differential between mean #1 and mean #2. The #10 ideal rating was that of disciplinarian, at 8.3.

The elementary teachers (177 usable responses), on the other hand, said the elementary principal was first of all (#1 on the real scale) a school program administrator, second - public relations facilitator, third - disciplinarian, fourth - teacher evaluator, fifth - pupil services coordinator. . . . .with eighth - curriculum supervisor, ninth - instructional supervisor, and tenth - self-evaluator as the lower priorities. They saw principals as the

school administrator; furthermore, they wanted the principals to maintain that as their #1 priority role (ideally). Next, they wanted the principals to be instructional supervisors, then staff selector, then curriculum supervisor; lastly, they saw the administrator as disciplinarian (#9) and self-evaluator (#10). Those are the actual rank orders as perceived by the elementary teachers. Looking at the mean ratings on the real scale, teachers saw the elementary principal first as school administrator with a mean rating of 2.97, second as public relations facilitator, 4.58, a significant differential in means; disciplinarian ranked third, 4.68. Lastly, they saw the elementary principal as self-evaluator, with a mean rating of 7.66. Ideally, they expected the elementary principal to remain as administrator, 3.65, then instructional supervisor, 4.36. There does not exist as much numerical difference between teacher ideal first and second choice means as there exists between principal ideal first and second choice means. Lastly, teachers expect the principal to be self-evaluator, (mean rating of 7.89).

TABLE 2: Elementary Teacher (N = 177) numerical and mean score rankings, real and ideal, of perceived role of elementary principal.

Role	Teacher Real (TR) Rank	Mean	Teacher Ideal (TI) Rank	Mean
Staff selector/orientator	8	6.16	3	4.49
Instructional supervisor	7	5.93	2	4.36
Public relations facilitator	2	4.58	7	5.66
Pupil services coordinator	5	5.59	6	5.58
Self-evaluator	10	7.66	10	7.89
Curriculum supervisor	9	6.19	4	4.91
Teacher evaluator	4	5.31	8	5.97
School program administrator	1	2.97	1	3.65
Disciplinarian	3	4.68	9	6.83
Morale builder	6	5.60	5	5.33

TABLE 3: Elementary Principal and Teacher rankings, real and ideal, of perceived role of elementary principal

Role	Principal Real (PR)	Principal Ideal (PI)	Teacher Real (TR)	Teacher Ideal (TI)
Staff selector/orientator	9	3	8	3
Instructional supervisor	4	1	7	2
Public relations facilitator	3	5	2	7
Pupil services coordinator	6	7	5	6
Self-evaluator	10	9	10	10
Curriculum supervisor	8	2	9	4
Teacher evaluator	7	8	4	8
School program administrator	1	4	1	1
Disciplinarian	2	10	3	9
Morale builder	5	6	6	5

Table 3 compares the rank orders by teachers and principals. On the real scale, both principals and teachers saw the principals first as administrator. The principals saw themselves as disciplinarian second, whereas the teachers ranked disciplinarian as third, with public relations facilitator as their second choice. The first three real rankings of both ----administrator, disciplinarian, and public relations facilitator---- pretty well agree. On the ideal scale, instructional supervisor came out as the principals' number one choice. Ideally, principals and teachers agree on rankings of instructional supervisor, program administrator, staff selector/orientator, curriculum supervisor as most important and on disciplinarian, self-evaluator, teacher evaluator, and pupil services coordinator as least important. From Table 3 can be observed that the teachers saw principals on the real scale in relatively the same way that the principals saw themselves on the real scale. Also the principals saw

themselves on the ideal scale almost as the teachers saw them on the ideal scale. But the real scale (both teachers and principals) has almost negative correlation with the ideal scale (both teachers and principals), which means, therefore, both that the principals are doing one thing but they want to be doing another, and the teachers see the principals doing one thing yet they want them to do another. Both teachers and principals agree on what the principals are doing and they both agree on what the principals should do. There is a conflict in that both teachers and principals say that what the principals are doing is not what the principals ought to be doing. The implications from this are many:

(1) The principals' actual role in instructional improvement is not viewed as being too important but both principals and teachers regard it as important. Principals ideally rated it 2.4 as their number one choice with their second choice being rated 4.0, a difference of 1.5---the greatest observable difference between two means. That's very interesting in the fact that elementary principals, ideally, overwhelmingly, wanted first of all to be instructional supervisors.

(2) The principals' role as staff selector/orientator right now is not too important, but the principals want to see it more important so that they can, in fact, help improve instruction. To better facilitate instructional improvement, they feel the necessity to be involved in selecting their staff.

(3) Disciplinarian came out on the real scale for both teacher and principal as very important but neither feel that it

should be very important in the principals' duties.

(4) Curriculum supervisor didn't come out to be very important on the real scale but both teachers and principals agree that it should be more important and the principals thought so even more strongly than did teachers.

(5) Principals serve as teacher evaluators but teachers don't want to see them in that function.

(6) On the real scale, both teachers and principals see the principal first as administrator. Teachers expect the principal to stay there (number one) with the principals' rating closely behind (number two).

Looking at an overall implication from this, both principals and teachers want the principals' role as instructional and curriculum supervisor to be more important than it presently is while the principal still maintains the role of administrator. The principals do want to see themselves first as instructional supervisor.

TABLE 4: Correlation Coefficients of principal and teacher rankings, real and ideal, of elementary principal

1.	PR	vs	PI	= .0182
2.	TR	vs	TI	= .0667
3.	PR	vs	TR	= .8545
4.	PI	vs	TI	= .8667

Comparing PR ratings vs TR ratings, we observe a .85 correlation, (significant at .001 level) which means that overall on the ranking, the principals and the teachers pretty much agreed on what the principals' role really is. Similarly, on the PI ratings vs TI ratings, there exists a .86

correlation; there was significant agreement from both principals and teachers (.001 level of significance) on what the principals role ought to be. When we look, however, at what the principals said the role really is, compared to what the role ought to be, there is only a .01 correlation; and when we look at what the teachers said the role really is compared to what the role ought to be, there is only a .06 correlation. Clearly then, both teachers and principals feel that what the principals are now doing is not what they ought to be doing in their role function.

Q: Do not others influence the role of principals?

A: Yes, the suggestion that not only teachers and principals determine what the principal's role is, but also other people for whom the principals work----is correct. I've been asked this question before. I've also been asked if the questionnaire has been distributed to parents, students, board members or central office administrative staff. No, it hasn't yet. I certainly intend to do so in future role studies of the elementary principal.

Q: If, in fact, principals want to be instructional leaders, where do they go for training?

A: There are various ways of enhancing skills in instructional improvement techniques, to include reading the professional literature, attending college or university courses in curriculum development and evaluation, supervision, analysis of teaching, and the like; working with supervisors; and in some cases, inquiring of the teachers themselves. There've been a number of school districts (starting in Palo Alto, California about twenty years ago) which have formed teams of principals joining together, going through a self-improvement process consisting of visiting each other's buildings and doing

clinical supervision observation cycles on teachers so that they could trade off the kinds of skills they have learned, such as (a) data gathering, (b) data analyzing, and then especially (c) developing or evolving a strategy for conferring with teachers. This process allows the principals to learn from each other. It's not always necessary to go to a University for a course in supervision; actually working with a real teacher whose behavior is your raw material and then seeing how three, four, or five of you react to that raw material and what you can do with it is a kind of exciting, intellectual experience.

Q: What implications does the principal's being involved in staff selection have?

A: The idea of the principal being able to select his own staff is a significant factor in the principal's morale and mind set to enable him to better work with teachers on instructional and curricular improvement. How many of you principals in the audience presently get involved in selecting your staff? (most raise their hands) That's great. How many have exclusive authority in selecting staff? (about 35 of the approximately 120 participants raise their hands) That's still a pretty good number that get involved in selecting staff. To me, that's very important, because getting involved in selecting your own staff and being involved in the making of that decision gives principals a positive mind set in working with teachers for improvement. Selection of staff is not as prevalent as it was a few years ago, therefore each selection becomes a crucial decision. I'll stress again that these three are integral components----instructional supervision, curriculum supervision, and staff selection: TO WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH STAFF ON INSTRUCTIONAL AND CURRICULAR IMPROVEMENT, THE PRINCIPAL MUST BE

ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN SELECTING THE TEACHING STAFF.

Q: You mentioned where and how the principal can get the training. How, though, does the principal get free enough to work on instructional and curricular supervision, even if he/she is trained to do these things?

A: I am frequently asked this question and suspect that there is no prescribed answer for it. One way to approach the solution is for the principal to say, "Well, if indeed this is one of my top priorities, I'll just have to budget my time so that I can get it accomplished." Now, that's no easy answer and there isn't any easy answer for it----there's not supposed to be an easy answer; but again, if indeed one wants to be an instructional and curricular supervisor, he'll have to budget the time for it.

Q: In reduction of force, we're running into another problem: that of inheriting staff we did not help select. So one of the priorities should be retraining staff inherited from another school.

A: Right, that's true. In fact, it's been generally assumed/suggested that mobility of teaching staff is decreasing, so teachers will remain in the same teaching position for a longer period----and therefore, you're right, there is need for retraining.

Q: Research says that teachers are looking at peer teachers to help them improve instruction, whereas your study indicates that teachers want principals to be instructional supervisors.

A: One of the things you obviously have to consider is evaluation of teacher personnel. The administrator (principal) necessarily gets involved in evaluation. Teachers want the principal to get involved in instructional improvement too. Trying to concomitantly be an

evaluator and an improver of instruction (though the two tasks are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but tend to be) is not an easy task. There is no easy way to do both, except for the fact that if, as a principal, you're going to get involved in evaluation, hopefully you can set up the evaluation objectives so that the teacher is responsible for the evaluation (a management by objectives approach), then you can also work with the teacher for instructional improvement. Again, that's no easy job but it's a good method if you have to get involved in both evaluation and instructional improvement.

Q: Do not most states require courses in curricular and instructional improvement for administrative certification?

A: Let me ask you. Do your states require these courses? (most raise their hands) Okay, those of you who have taken the courses, how many of you feel comfortable in then going into a teacher's class to work on instructional improvement? (very few raise hands to indicate they do) Your response is similar to that I received recently from groups of Texas elementary principals. In addition, from this present survey in Texas, it was concluded (and suggested that it would be an excellent idea) to have the Elementary Principals' Association in conjunction with perhaps the Texas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development talk to the state department certification personnel and say "Let's take a look at the courses required for administrative certification and perhaps restructure to include more of the instructional and curriculum improvement courses in the certification program and eliminate others not as essential to the program."

C: But still, one becomes obsolete very rapidly.

A: Yes, that's true. Learning is a never ending process, and you must keep on working to try to improve.

C: That's hard to do.

A: That's right, but it's still fun when you get in the classroom and see the joyous look on some youngster's face when he feels he's learned something, then comes up to you, grabs you by the arm and says, "Hey, I like this." When that happens to you in either the teacher or principal role, it makes you realize how important that extra effort was and it makes you feel good, too.

C: In effect, this is partly a function of your own priorities. If you want to be an instructional leader, you can find the time.

A: What one finds in most of the literature on this subject (role function selection) is pretty much consistent with your comment to the effect that we do those things which we want most to get done. I constantly hear complaints from principals that role management tends to be especially time consuming and that becomes even worse when you've got Title I programs and other responsibilities for which you have to provide data to the central office, and when the central office is constantly making demands on you and when, more recently, school bond issues and other things are threatened by "back to the basics" ideas. I think it's very real that sometimes even the best intentioned and best time budgeted principals, do in fact, find that when a week is up, they were able to devote less time than they really wanted to certain aspects of their role functions.

An interesting fact is that the self-evaluator role on this survey was rated as low as it was. The principals rated it in real terms as #10, and in ideal terms as #9. Too, both teachers' real and ideal ratings of it were down at the bottom of their preference scale. I believe we're obliged to ask ourselves, "How do we find out if we're doing okay?" What are the sources of information available to the principal in terms of how he/she may be getting along? Do we, for example, have a reverse communications process with our teachers? They know how we feel about them presumably, through the ratings sheets and other uses that we make of the recognition and reward system, but lots of principals don't know what their teachers actually consider their services to be. And there wouldn't be any problem at all for them (principals) to circulate anonymous objective questionnaires, or to appoint committees whose responsibility would be to collect data from colleagues and provide them with a role feedback. As administrators, we have need for that kind of information. Another thing we need to more seriously consider and better effect is inservice growth efforts on our own part. For instance, what do we read? The fact that our organization (NAESP) has made available to us such a first-class and high quality journal (National Elementary Principal) is one of the good things about being an elementary principal these days, at least in my opinion. This journal, as well as others, should be on our regular reading list.

The tabulation of results of your own preferences for perceived elements of the elementary principal's role, real and ideal, is reflected in Table 5. On the real scale, your top three choices include administrator and disciplinarian while your lowest choice was that of self-evaluator. Indeed, your choices as indicated, correlate with those of the Texas

elementary principals and teachers. More significantly, your top four ideal choices, instructional supervisor, school program administrator, curriculum supervisor, and staff selector/orientator correlate exactly with those of the Texas elementary principals and teachers, as do your designated least important role functions of self-evaluator and disciplinarian. Too, they agree with a similar study conducted in Tennessee.

TABLE 5: Seminar Participants (N = 120) numerical and mean score rankings, real and ideal, of perceived role of elementary principals.

Role	Principal Real (PR) Rank	Mean	Principal Ideal (PI) Rank	Mean
Instructional supervisor	3	4.882	1	2.376
School program administrator	1	2.87	2	3.494
Curriculum supervisor	7	6.718	3	4.376
Staff selector/orientator	8	6.623	4	4.718
Teacher evaluator	4	4.976	5	5.412
Public relations facilitator	5	5.129	6	5.918
Pupil services coordinator	9	6.718	7	6.318
Morale builder	6	5.812	8	6.353
Self-evaluator	10	8.071	9	7.435
Disciplinarian	2	4.247	10	9.165

In summary then, I'd like to say that if surveys from one state (Texas), another state (Tennessee), and a survey of people like you from across the country who are elementary principals feel that the elementary principal ought to function as an instructional supervisor, then perhaps we had better unite in our efforts to assure that the elementary principal is better prepared (with necessary support) to function in the role as it is perceived.